

## CHAPTER VIII

### VOLITION

IF we examine the processes by which we form resolutions, or " make up our minds, we shall find that it is only in a small proportion of cases that we can claim to have acted spontaneously, or by the exercise of free will. Our conclusions are generally suggested to us by habit, by impulses which we do not control, or by the people around us. Thus, when I awake in the morning, I am sensible of a struggle between a desire to remain in bed and a desire to get up. I make up my mind to get up, and do so. But in reality my mind was made up for me by habit. I rise because it is the usual hour for rising. I prove that this is so by rising about the same hour every morning—a consistency of behaviour which could never be expected did I exercise every morning an unfettered spontaneity. On the other hand, at times I appear to act entirely of my own accord, and untrammelled by habit. I may suddenly determine to rise an hour earlier than usual on Midsummer Day, to take a stroll before breakfast. We may then class our resolutions as of two kinds—suggested (or imitative) and original. I may invest money in oil shares because I am infected with the excitement of a " boom " in oil: in this case my decision has been suggested to me. Or I may invest after carefully examining market reports, and comparing the prospects of